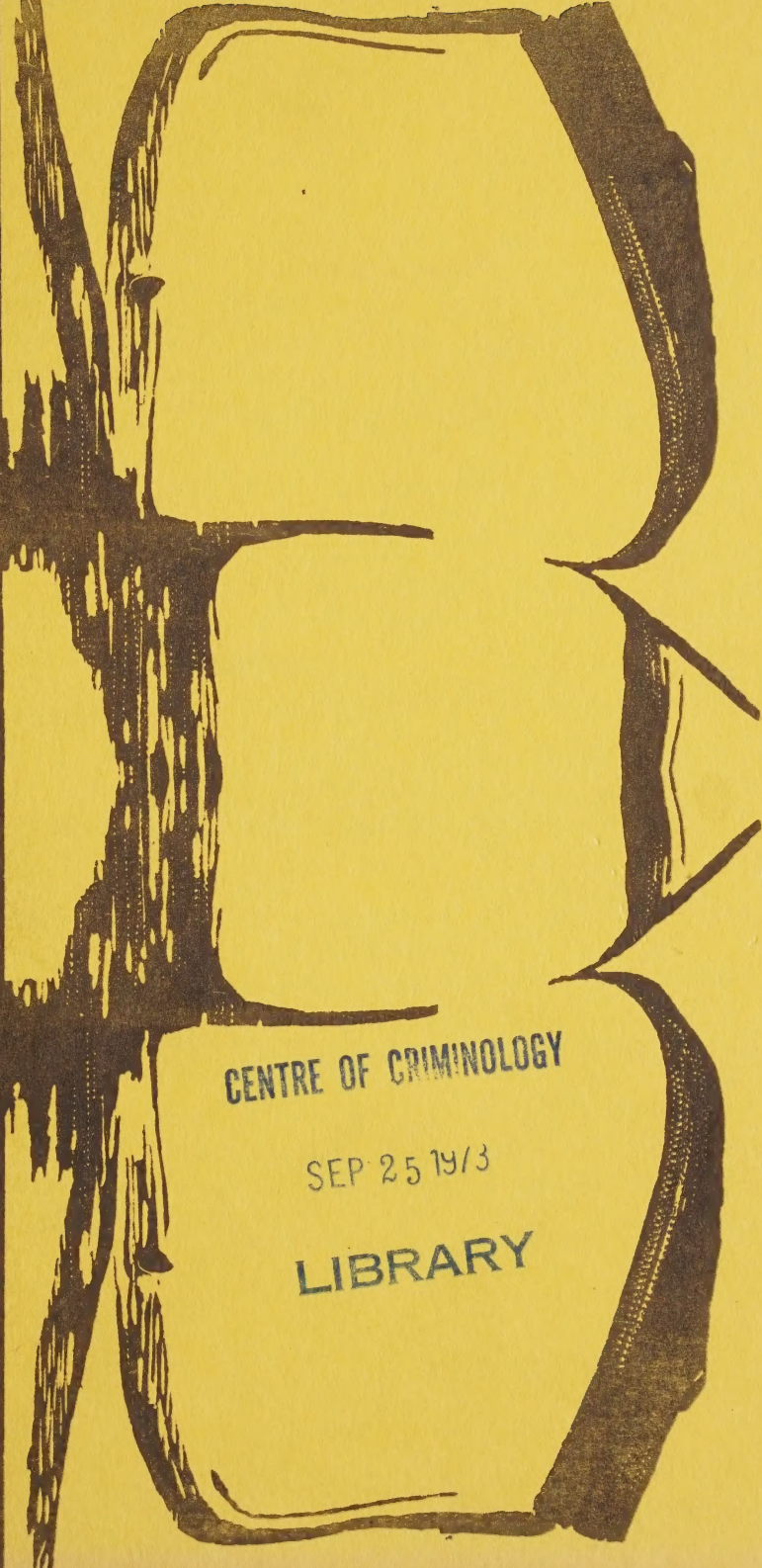


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CENTRE OF CRIMINOLOGY

SEP 25 1973

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TRANSITION

Address: 314 220 3rd Avenue South
Saskatoon, Saskatchewan

Editor: Arthur Montague

Editorial Staff: David Earl Williams
Wm. L. Bell

Inmates: Prince Albert
Drumheller
Matsqui
Stony Mountain
Dorchester

Art Design: Ann Klein Nosen

Production Manager: Les Klassen

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NOTES AND OTHER CLUTTER

An article about the Corrections Worker as a Social Deviant slated for this issue will not appear until next month. Main reason for the change is space limitation. With this issue we continue our policy of slow change in our layouts, and to compensate for extra space being used in our titles we shall be expanding to forty pages next month.

On Page Six is the first response we have received from Canadian Penitentiary Service personnel to our magazine. We print it because we suspect it reflects the feelings of more than a few CPS people and they should know that at least one of their number is prepared to comment publicly. We wonder if Discussion would print a letter of similar tone if we sent it to them.

Many new readers who have come to Transition only during the past few months have expressed puzzlement as to why most of our contributions are printed anonymously. Although we are trying to get away from this as much as possible (see Page Five, for example), the sad fact remains that between the CPS and NPS too much power is wielded over inmates and parolees for us to invite its use on contributors, and we firmly believe that at the existing level of understanding and appreciation between captives and captors it would be used in the interests of the captors. When the level becomes one of rapport rather than conflict, one of frankness rather than deceit, we will name our contributors because we're proud of their concern and believe it deserves individual recognition.

EDITORIAL

Paul Faguy, Commissioner of Penitentiaries, recently managed to point out a serious inconsistency in correctional practice. The subject was prisoners' rights.

To some cons, he was quoted as saying, "I'll give you rights but you will have to assume responsibility for those rights ... rights and responsibility go hand in hand." We recognize that Mr. Faguy is not talking about fundamental human rights, such as freedom of speech or freedom to protect oneself from arbitrary but totalitarian power. In fact, Mr. Faguy is not talking about rights at all; he is talking about privileges. However he is right about one thing: rights and responsibility go hand in hand.

The inconsistency is in his failure, and that of the entire corrections complex, to recognize that responsibility goes hand in hand with decision-making power. And in the same Weekend Magazine article, Mr. Faguy states, "the inmates are never in a decision-making situation." It should follow from this that if the inmate has no decision-making power he should therefore have no responsibility and therefore he has no rights. This is the consistent argument; it is also the reality of prison life. The inmate is told he has rights but his exercise of them is sanctioned --- and a sanctioned right is no right at all.

4.

Mr. Faguy did not admit this and to the degree he failed to admit it he misinformed the public! ---deliberately, because he knows better. What Mr. Faguy actually demands from inmates is their responsibility/accountability for decisions and actions which they do not control. What Mr. Faguy demands from inmates is their responsibility for the decisions and actions of prison administrators and workers. He is demanding from inmates something he does not demand from his own staff.

But how convenient! If a program fails, whether the reasons are poor conception, poor implementation, poor communication --- you name it --- the inmate is blamed, is held responsible for the failure. This gets the corrections system off the hook; its personnel remain inviolate ... and the inmate, what about him? He has rights; they have been legislated, but also legislated and constantly reinforced by such as Mr. Faguy's contradictory, irresponsible statement quoted here is the deprivation of these rights.

Should inmates be held responsible? According to the Solicitor General's 1971-72 Annual Report, 36% of federal prisoners are being held in maximum security institutions. According to the Mohr Report done during the same period only a fraction, about 1/5 of this 36%, require maximum security for the protection of the public. Add to this that our maximum security institutions are archaic, that the Mohr Report recommended closure of New Westminister, Saskatchewan, Millhaven, SCU in Quebec, and Dorchester --- all maximum security penitentiaries. If inmates are going to be held responsible for this situation then every one of them should be charged with attempting suicide because for them to be responsible for such deplorable

conditions as exists in these institutions is for them to be responsible for what in effect is destroying them as potential citizens.'

We can understand why Mr. Faguy and everyone else in corrections doesn't want to be responsible for such destruction. But if they insist on blaming inmates they should at least provide the inmate means to change the situation, provide it freely and without strings. If he is to have the right to be responsible for decisions, he should have the right to make the decisions, because decision-making is what rights are all about, even the right not to make a decision if he so chooses.

LETTER FROM PRINCE ALBERT

Since June, 1972, articles written by men from behind the Sask. Pen'y. walls have appeared weekly in the Prince Albert Daily Herald. For the most part, these articles have been a lot of crap; the contents being censored, sorted, and stamped "Good PR" by C. Menard, Deputy Director at Sask. Pen'y. Any comments potentially dangerous to the Administration's "pleasant relationship" with the community have had to be written in such a subtle manner that the average Prince Albertan would be at a loss to understand what the articles were in fact saying. What

6.

the articles implied was understood: the Administration must be very liberal and understanding to allow actual convicts to write for a local newspaper. All of which contributes to the above-mentioned "pleasant relationship".

A point the general public is probably unaware of is that anyone working at the institution is prohibited from having his opinions aired through the same source as the convicts. Prohibited, that is, unless the government employees, in their attempts to be heard, go through "proper channels". This means that what needed to be said is censored and otherwise watered down until it has lost its meaning and becomes "good PR".

Unless both sides (convict and corrector) are given the opportunity to say it like it really is, the community will continue to be screwed by an administration more interested in looking good than letting the truth be known, more interested in looking good than in doing good.

Poetic Justice

... who, if the truth be known is

W.R. (Randy) Sigurdson

LETTER FROM STONY MOUNTAIN

I refer to the June, 1973, issue of Transition, Volume 1, No. 5.

Your "Crime Against Humanity Award" article on page 36 is yet another example of irresponsible

"journalism" writing by someone who knows little of what he writes about.

In the first place there is no bar on chocolate cake at coffee break, as the inmates who have shared some will attest to. Secondly, there is no coffee break in the Department as they are continuously working without a break and have their coffee while they work in order to provide a visiting and correspondence service to the inmates of this Institution.

If any award was to be given Mr. Al Hickey, it would be for "Kindness and consideration", recommended on the basis of letters and cards from the people who visit the inmates thanking Mr. Hickey for his kindness and consideration to them while here visiting their relatives or friends.

On the other hand you might consider certain awards for yourself, such as irresponsibility and crummy reporting.

It is the kind of insensitivity and crassness this article depicts that does nothing to help relations between staff and inmates which would appear to be your interest.

G.F. Tegman

Director

Stony Mountain Penitentiary

ED.NOTE: Mr. Tegman has been invited to contribute an article(s) on the subject(s) of censorship and the training of correctional officers to a forthcoming issue of Transition.

STOP LABELLING!!

by

david earl williams

Any word that is used to describe what people are supposed to be is a label. We have an unlimited supply of them.

For example, I suppose one could find a score or more words that can be used to describe the criminal offender and ex-offender. Trying to describe what these terms stand for could and probably does fill hundreds of books. The criminal is simply another phenomenon, that we as a society are constantly confronted with. I have no idea why we have to label the criminal or, for that matter, any part of our society, but we do.

We constantly strive to put labels on people. Is it perhaps we need to feel that we must have control over others? Is it perhaps that we feel more secure in our own little space when we can keep people we find offensive in their "proper" places? Is it perhaps we fear letting others control us and they in turn fear us in case we get control over them. Why we label really isn't important. The point is we do and if I may be allowed a label of my own, I think it is very "wrong".

Nothing irritates me more than when I hear so-called "honorable" and "respected" citizens in our community put down youth, put down Indians,

put down Métis, put down ex-cons or cons, put down blacks, or put down anyone who doesn't "come up to their own individual standards". If "coming up to their individual standards" means having to put labels on people and walk around with a "holier than thou" attitude, is it any wonder we don't and won't.

A "respected" citizen-parent refuses to let an ex-offender date his daughter because he is probably a "bad influence" who will lead her into a "vice-ridden" world. Meanwhile the ex-offender may be living a saintly life and the daughter may be a whore ---the two are not necessarily unrelated, except for the citizen-parent. An employer, "pillar of the business community", may refuse to hire Indians or Métis because he has decided they "drink too much" or are "too lazy".

When you put on a label, you automatically put on discrimination. How does one satisfy our "respected" (and occasionally respectable) citizens? What would they have us do: all dress alike, talk alike, act alike, be exact carbon copies of them, and then maybe we can live in their world ... or maybe the ex-offenders should make a point of leading the daughters into vice and the Indians and Métis should stay drunk all the time or laze about all the time, just to help the "respected" segment of society confirm the rightness of their label. We should be less than human just because we are labelled as less than human? Is that what we want in this so-called "best of all possible worlds"? Is that what we want in this so-called "democratic" country of ours. Well, whether we want it or not, we have it. The question we have to ask ourselves is, do we want to keep it?

You know, I really do not blame the employers

or the fathers and mothers and all the rest. Nor can I put the blame on any one individual who is guilty of people-labelling. I too have my moments of people-labelling, but I know it is "wrong". If I must put the blame on something, and I must to make myself feel better, I would say that the structure of our so-called "democratic" society is to blame. In order to change the structure, first we all as individuals must be made aware of our own individual shortcomings and we must make an attempt at changing ourselves first. Only if we become totally aware that we are invalidating people by using labels especially those that feature negative connotations, can we hope to stop using them and thus make the "ideal" of a democracy become a reality.

How many labels like the following are YOU guilty of using:

Freak	Phoney	Hippie
Establishment	Alcoholic	Drug Addict
Insane	Indian	Inferior
Superior	Bad	Evil
Manic Depressive	Schizo	Psychopathic
Religious	Religious Fanatic	
Mental Retard	Idiot	Nut
Crazy	Drop-out	Ex-con
Con	Welfare Bum	Unemployed Bum
Homosexual	Lazy	No Good

Make your own list, there are a million more. Test yourself. As you drop a label cross it out on your list and give yourself 100 points on your "How-to-become-a-real-human-being-scale."

Remember, no matter what we do for a living, how much money we make, what educational standing we have achieved, what religious order we belong to, what colour our skins are, how old we are, or what troubles we have had ... what we are, we and what we are, first and foremost, are HUMAN BEINGS

We are all on "spaceship Earth" together, we are all members of the same crew heading onward to the same end. Let's help each other reach the same destination just a little easier. Let's START by STOPPING the LABELLING.

Oh, by the way, wouldn't it be great if in order to take out the "respected" daughter you had to be an ex-offender, or if you wanted to get a job you had to be an Indian or Métis?

COPPING-OUT THE UNION WAY

In terms of community development in areas of life which affect ex-offenders and many socially disadvantaged groups, the trade unions generally are the largest, best-organized cop-outs in Canadian society.

The time has come for trade unions to re-assess their role in the community. It does not begin and end with securing employment, rising wages, and cushioning benefits for rank and file union members. Given the decreased importance of the workday in Canadian life, a development largely inspired by union activity, and the increased importance of leisure time, the former role of the unions has also decreased in importance. Primarily this has been due to the unions failure to realize that

they are more than a bargaining agent between employees and employers, they also have a responsibility to the community as a whole, a responsibility they have woefully neglected. Actually, by this neglect the unions have failed their members and to this extent most of the members have failed their community. In effect, our trade unions are presently a colossal waste of a substantial community resource.

Except in superficial ways, community involvement is a no-no for trade unions, working either as a union body or as sponsor or organizer of rank and file voluntary participation in the affairs and services of the community. Generally the unions will help out the United Appeal, perhaps with a member check-off at donation time, but too rarely are union representatives --- as representatives --- found involved in program work. In Saskatoon you can count the union people who do spare-time street work on one hand. If you want their advice (the others, I mean), you must usually plug into their bureaucracy, which unfortunately is about as effective as plugging into any bureaucracy, waste of time.

Talking to union administrators about their community activities brings the response: "the main reason we don't do much is because no one ever asks us, no one will tell us what needs to be done." Any offender who ever pleaded ignorance of the law as a defence in criminal court will tell how ineffective that plea is in getting a not-guilty verdict. Because unions cannot find community problems to solve, community programs to support, community needs to satisfy, they apparently assume there are none or that what there are are being looked after by someone else. One hopes that the Great Unwashed will at least have the social conscience to pick its eyes

clear and take a look beyond its mortgages, TV's, and camper trailers. Our justice system reasons that a man who passively watches an offence being committed is just as guilty as the offender: passivity constitutes consent. Using the same reasoning, and there's no reason why we shouldn't if the justice system is to derive any validity from our social system, the trade unions must share guilt for existing social problems, and their share is more than most because the unions have the resources to affect change more than most.

The unions have been caught and convicted, to our satisfaction. But before they can be rehabilitated they must accept their guilt.

They must accept that they have not gone out of their way to contribute to the formulation of such things as Apprenticeship Training Programs for the socially and physically handicapped. They must accept that some of their contracts in protecting members bar many other individuals from equal employment opportunities and even fruitful membership in the unions. They must accept that strikes in our present economic system are more detrimental to our society's quality of life for everyone including the strikers themselves than would be a commitment of strike funds to general programs of social betterment not only for rank and file members but for everyone in the community. Active community service should be a responsibility taken up wilfully and conscientiously by every person and organization living in and benefitting from a community, and service is more than paying taxes --- even convicts are paying taxes --- service is participation, service is involved concern, and service is citizenship.

GET WITH THE PROGRAM

by the Nighttripper

Well, it has happened again. Once more prison officials at both Saskatchewan Penitentiary and in Ottawa have shown themselves be be bumbling incompetents. With the aid of the National Parole Board they have succeeded in wrecking another program before it got off the ground. The program I am speaking of is the much-praised education program at Saskatchewan Penitentiary.

Part of the education program at the penitentiary is on a University level where University courses are brought in and taught by professors from the University of Saskatchewan. In the last two years five courses in the liberal arts and social sciences have been given. This year another five courses are to be offered. All the courses are on the first-year level.

The problem arises when the individuals who have taken the first five courses are considered. There is nowhere they can go. At most, they require two of the five courses which are to come in this Fall. Also, what happens after this year? Due to a lack of planning there is no way that the people who have completed a first year of university can further their education.

I know several of the inmates who desire to attain a degree in either the social sciences or the arts. Also there are some who wish to attain degrees in the natural sciences. But they cannot further their education within the walls because

the institution will not offer courses of other than a first-year level due to the transfer of inmates to other institutions. Another problem which arises is that in the second year students customarily become more specialized in whatever field they wish to earn a degree.

The ideal solution would be either to let the inmates out on parole or let them stay at a halfway house during the year to attend classes on campus.

Of the 40 or so people who were involved in the last two years with this program, I would say that 15 are interested in obtaining a university degree of some sort. Of those 15, only two have obtained a parole to attend university. One is the editor of Transition and the other just recently got a day parole to attend Summer Session along with a stipulation that he could not study law. Several other persons have attempted to obtain a parole or day parole so that they may attend university. Let me also say that these people were serious about obtaining degrees. They were all turned down. One of the examples of reasons for such decisions by the parole board was that it was unrealistic for the individual to desire a university degree.

How is such a program going to succeed if the parole board causes frustration and depression to replace the enthusiasm and expectations of the inmate? In my opinion this program could be the best program the institutions of Canada have going for them. It is obvious that with education and a goal, an individual is less likely to return to crime.

This program can succeed only if prison officials recognize the problems that the program has instead of ignoring or avoiding them, and only if the parole board and the public accepts the fact that they must take some kind of chance. Nothing else has worked so it must be time to try something new, like applying programs the way they're designed rather than the way they're most convenient.

NATIONAL ORGANIZATION NEWS

A week-long meeting of the offender/ex-offender National Conference Committee held earlier this month in Ottawa resulted in a brief being submitted to Solicitor General Warren Allmand which outlined the groundwork necessary for organizing a Canadian conference based on the concept of self-help and the role of the ex-offender in the criminal justice system as well as the formation of a national committee of ex-offenders.

The Committee met with Allmand, J.W. Braithwaite of the CPS, George Street of the NPS, and Colin Shepard of the Solicitor General's Correctional Consultation Center, among others. Reportedly, Warren Allmand has expressed approval in principle of the Committee objectives.

Every region of Canada was represented by the Committee. Douglas Dunn, who had previously resigned as Acting Chairman due to health reasons, was unable to attend. The new Acting Chairman is Roger Larche of Hull, Quebec. In a telephone conversation shortly before our press time he expressed hope that a firm commitment for funding would be forthcoming from the Solicitor General's Department within a month.

W A N T E D

Transition needs an English-French translator to prepare a French language edition of Transition each month for distribution to French Canadian inmates who've sensibly not bothered to learn much English or equally sensibly prefer to read French.

A familiarity with "gutter" French Canadian is essential, as is a desire to work without pay, at least for the time being.

We would prefer that the translator be an inmate or ex-inmate.

Replies should be addressed to the Editor, care of the address on the first page of the magazine.

PAROLE AND THE NATIVES

Statement of the Native Brotherhood of Saskatchewan Penitentiary

The Native Brotherhood within the walls of the Saskatchewan Penitentiary has always looked forward to presenting views on the parole system. Since parole plays a significant part in the process of rehabilitation, we feel as a group we can contribute in the search for alternatives. It has been our experience to realize that we as natives had a greater difficulty in maintaining or successfully completing parole because of some problems we failed to recognize prior to our release into society. There are a lot of determining factors which have led to our belief that the present system is inadequate in regards to natives who apply for parole. The failure rate should speak for itself in articulating the seriousness of this problem.

We have come to understand that because of our social upbringing, our background and our culture, we pose differently altogether in the light of the problem. It is obvious the system of parole isn't geared towards the native; yet we are up to 50% of the inmate population, particularly in the 3 prairie provinces. With these facts and figures it was never understood why nothing was ever done to assist inmates of Indian background. The problem of recidivism has always been overlooked where we were concerned.

Nobody has ever bothered to search the cause and effects. Because of this the Native Brotherhood was established as a self-help group that endeavoured to uncover some of the problems.

We would like to bring to your attention for illustration purposes some of the problems any native might face upon application for or while on parole.

1. It is the desire for the individual concerned to go home, back to the reserve where his friends and family reside. It is his home, yet he is encouraged to take his parole to a strange and alien environment, where he doesn't know anyone and knowledge for survival in the city just isn't in his personality. If he still insists on going back to the reserves his chances for parole are somewhat decreased.

2. The habit of labelling all natives inmates as alcoholics hampers rather than helps. The restriction towards the use of alcohol or intoxicants has proved ineffective, it has rather been responsible for a lot of needless revocations and suspensions.

3. Upon release on parole, the native ex-inmate has difficulty in communicating with his middle class parole officer. The cultural values and so forth differ, making it difficult for both parties to come to an understanding. Communication is important to the ex-inmate with problems.

These are just three of the problems the native inmate or ex-inmate has to overcome or live with on parole. Furthermore, it is

also our desire at this time to voice our opinions in what could be done for us. We have taken all the elements of parole into consideration prior to making recommendations. We know the importance of community acceptance, suitability, and available resources. This isn't of primary concern with us right now. It is the start of change that is most important to us, particularly changes of attitude views towards us, the native inmates. There is a need for radical change of the National Parole Service, correctional centres, penitentiaries, etc., etc. It is time these agencies and institutions recognized the reserve as a suitable environment for parole. With that, here are our recommendations:

- a) The use of native ex-inmates as parole officers and probation officers.
- b) Appointment of native people to the parole board.
- c) Recognition of the Native Brotherhood as a rehabilitative group.
- d) The recognition of an outside sponsor group such as the Métis Society, Federation of Saskatchewan Indians, and Native Alcohol Council.
- e) Initiation of a program on the reserve level where the biggest area of the problem is evident.

It is to be emphasized that communication is vital between the inmates and correctional staff in all areas of rehabilitation. The inmates of the Native Brotherhood have taken initiative in trying to discover solutions that would apply to us. We feel that a positive attitude should be adopted in assisting us because collectively we may find the answer to the problem of recidivism.

SELF-HELP GROUPS:

Monstrous Put-on, New Cult,
or Effective Corrections Instrument?

Probably the same question has been asked of Alcoholics Anonymous. For AA it has never been answered satisfactorily, primarily because AA can be an effective corrections instrument and a put-on or cult at the same time. And why not? The AA is a self-help group in the formal sense of its members helping themselves by helping each other and any others they contact. To be answered, the question must be treated in terms different in degree rather than different in kind because to be a put-on, cult, or corrections instrument is not to be compatible.

Tony Parlatt, for example, CPS Educational Services Asst. Director --- who reportedly got this job as a reward for sucking \$80,000 in grants out of the Donner Foundation --- fancies himself messiah in charge of morals modification, hoked up a pre-sumptuous put-on, a program for "accelerating moral

"development in inmates", and called it a corrections instrument. Good for Tony; he joins a long list of parasitic charlatans who make their living "correcting" because they have seen that the put-on, the cult, and the corrections instrument are not incompatible. Difference in degree? "Accelerated moral development" is heavy on the put-on, heavy on the cult, light on the corrections; but all three elements are simultaneously present. So it is, we suspect, with most self-help groups.

Step Two of the much-lauded Seven Steps To Freedom is "realizing that there is a power from which we can gain strength, we decided to use that power," yet the motto of the 7th Step Society, one of the largest and apparently most successful self-help groups (if size is any indication, and there seem few others), is "think realistically". Their blurbs read something like "God is running with us but don't mention his name cuz there might be some atheists on the Parole Board and God is passé these days anyway." The 7th Step Society is a put-on, it's also cultist, but overshadowing these --- it is a very effective corrections instrument. The same can be said of Synanon, X-Kalay, the Freedom Group, and most other self-help groups.

It can be said of self-help groups that their effectiveness grows in proportion to the degree their members do-not believe their own propoganda. It's okay and maybe even necessary to believe a little of it but when belief begins to blind, the worker loses sight of the realities and problems of those he is trying to help. It's okay to see the light but a too-bright light is just as blinding as pitch dark.

This points up a side to self-help groups which most of their members/workers fail to see:

the individuals most often helped are the member/workers themselves. Yet this may be where their real effectiveness lies. For a number of years several criminologists in California have been studying this phenomenon. Among other things their studies indicated, self-help groups did not have appreciably increased success with parolees they supervised or counselled, but recidivism among member/workers was almost nil. Reason for this, they concluded, had nothing to do with the good faith of the member/workers or the bad faith of some of their clients. Rather, it was related to the member/worker's position relative to the opinions of his fellows and the public in general. Much better it is for one's self-esteem to be regarded as a reformed ex-con than as a regular ex-con, and every day the member/worker demonstrates, for others and for himself to see, his reformation and, as important, his unselfishness, in wanting to pass on to the unconverted the secret wisdom of effective corrections.

Looking at it in this light, some of the haloes disappear into the gloom of selfishness, one may suppose. But moving the light a fraction, "thinking realistically", some previously downright nasty people are making a success of self-help. So, what difference if the only ones helped are the helpers themselves? They're staying on the street. They're contributing to the community wealth and well-being ---a damn sight more than most good citizens; and sometimes they're even helping others. If self-help is what it takes, and in many cases this seems to be so, then we need more of it. But guys, if God is running with you make sure you're the pace-setter, because He hasn't broken any records in the last millennial or so.

PSSST!
 Hey, you
 Yeah, you
 C'MERE

Wanna Buy an Unused, Untried Penal Policy?

Lately the trends in our little (but rehabilitative) penitentiary have been regressive. As a matter of fact this regression is national.

Elections, as we are all aware, may be just around the corner AND all politicians are vote-wise. Therefore, it is expedient to be regressive because in Canada the most regressive party is the one that gets the votes. In Canada, inmates are blown about by the winds of this stupidity.

The stupid are the "main men" and the rehabilitation of offenders is secondary to deterrence (see Trudeau). This is a gross stupidity! Anyone who knows anything --- or even those who know nothing (see the Solicitor General and Mr. Street)---need only spend five minutes contemplating the question of deterrence to know that it just doesn't work.....people rob and kill, they always have and they always will! Canada's prisons do nothing to deter ---no prison can. Prisons are after the fact ---the crime has already been committed. I'm convinced that the only people who are deterred by the thought of prison are those people who will never come to prison anyways.

This leaves us with the question, "If prisons don't deter, what should they be doing?" Stupidity again rules supreme, because

cause sitting in my cell I can see what the commonly held answer is too --- punishment!! Well, if I'm going to be punished then look out Mother because that means violence --- and the people outside best remember that we in prison are extremely adept at violence. (See Eldon Woolliams). We all have Masters degrees in it --- working on Doctorates! Best keep in mind that Canada's prisons are not as secure as Canadians would like (see the recent rash of escapes). Best keep in mind that eventually everybody returns to the community --- maybe with their Doctorate.

With the potential for violence that is generated and intensified by being in prison, society has a lot to worry about.

So, if the average Canadian is not stupid (see some Scandinavian penal policies), then he best be looking for a solution that is not claiming punishment and deterrence as its redeeming factors. Hey, why don't you develop the potential that we have. Now, at the Congress there was a lot of talk about the value of the offender. Some of it was cool; some just plain bullshit! It is my opinion that the only value that convicts possess is the potential to quit breaking the law. This may sound stupid --- but stupidity is the rule rather than the exception, so pardon me mine. If all convicts are given an alternative to punishment then quite a few will take it. That means a reduction in the crime rate, a reduction in the recidivist rate, and a little less fear in the streets.

Before I put my pen away, it should be

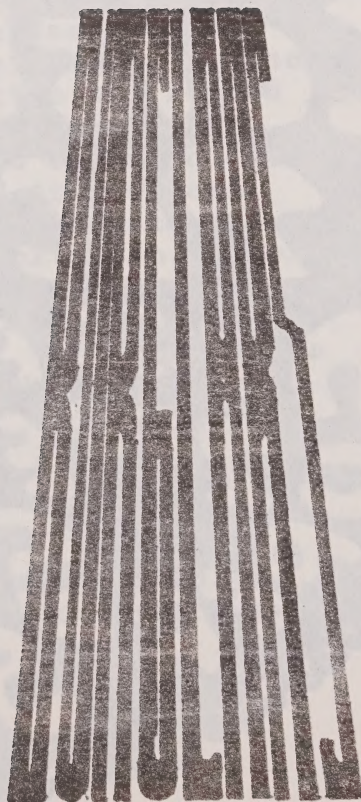
pointed out (in case you aren't aware) that society is raising a new generation of bank robbers, safe-crackers, cheque writers, and just all-around bad asses. It is inevitable that there will always be deviants so why don't you people begin to offer us alternatives. Don't wait for us to see the light. We've already seen one --- we're in prison. Show us a different light and then try to convince us that it is a better light. We are skeptical --- we want proofs!

NEXT MONTH: What Do Inmates Want: A Look at the American Prisoner's Rights Movement and Its Relevance to Canadian Inmates. Also, A Report on Academic Programs in Prisons Across the Country.

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YOUR



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don't you people
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Ball
Sept. 28

Ceisureland
TICKETS

U 1.50 EACH ADV.
C 2.00 EACH-DOOR
PER SECRET
STREET BAND

SPONSORED BY THE
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YOUR MOVE

In the last few months the Saskatchewan Penitentiary has had one guard shot and one guard stabbed. Fortunately (for everyone concerned), the guards did not die. Subsequent to this violence, a government Commission was authorized to investigate the morale of the guards.

In the last few months the Saskatchewan Penitentiary has had six suicides. Subsequent to this destruction, a Committee was formed to investigate the suicides and to try to determine if these murders had a common cause. A psychiatrist was dispatched from Ottawa. He came to Prince Albert equipped with a closed mind and a gallon of whitewash. There now appears to be an attempt afoot to attribute the suicides to drug abuse. A nice trick if they can pull it off --- everyone is down on dope fiends anyway. How convenient!

It is the opinion of the majority of the cons in here that even if the real reasons for the deaths become apparent, little will be done to alleviate or change the causes.

The real fact is that the system grinds convicts down until they are faced with few

alternatives --- all violent. When you strip a man (any man) of all hope and pride, you leave him with nothing but anger and a potential for violence. When you give with one hand (mostly lip service to inadequate policies) and take away with the other, men become desperate. And desperate men are dangerous, to themselves and to others.

The causes of the deaths and the violence are of such a nature that their correction would contravene the existing policy of punishment and detention. When any man is denied all hope, when hope is ruthlessly plucked from him, that man can be expected to react violently. Now, I'm not trying to rationalize the suicides or violence, but I am saying that despair breeds violence and anger.

What is being done to correct these problems? Increased security! What should be done? Increased measures of humanity! Start satisfying some of the expectations which have been built in the last three years.

In the July 4th edition of the Prince Albert Herald, then-Acting Director Jim O'Sullivan was quoted, "We just don't have any idea why (the suicides are occurring). It's not just the prison confinement, though. I mean people outside kill themselves. There must be more." Well, Mr. O'Sullivan, it's your type of thinking (or lack of it), and your type of comment that makes the Saskatchewan Penitentiary the 18th century 1984 that it is. I think, Mr. O'Sullivan that you should take your cue from Al Hartley and denounce the system (see Transition, June) ----- perhaps then we would begin to

see some progress.

A lot of cons resent the attitudes expressed by the powers that be. Commissions on morale and Committees (or something) on inmate suicides are quite divergent solutions to problems that have the same cause. The really unique part of the whole mess is that the guards are not particularly pleased either. Oh, a lot of money will be spent. A lot of talk will make the rounds. A lot of recommendations will be made --- some good, some bad.

In the end, nothing will be done. The despair will continue. More men will kill themselves. More men will take desperate measures to alleviate their pain. And the bureaucracy will continue to grind down convicts.

When will it all stop?

We hear a lot of comments about the value of human life. Some of the men in here are coing life because of society's professed belief in the value of human life. This professed belief appears to us to be a lot of hypocritical bullshit! Society self-righteously proclaims the value of human life but then ignores the fact that six cons have been murdered by its system and nothing is done about it. Where does that leave us? Is that supposed to endear society to us? Is that the kind of attitude or belief complex that society wants us to adopt? If it is, forget it --- we don't need it, we don't want it.

The days of business as usual are gone. The choice is to help us or to provide us the means to help ourselves. A third choice is what's happening now. This last we are no longer prepared to accept!

ED. NOTE: Since this article was written, the "Suicide Commission" has filed its report of findings. It stated that the suicides have no common denominator and that therefore they were unrelated to each other. There is, however, one common denominator it failed to note or assess: all of the dead were inmates in the same penitentiary.

SLOW GEORGE REPLIES ...

I decided to start the Advice to Inmates column in the next issue instead of this one so that I'd have time to apply all of my wisdom to the letters guys have been sending me.

I won't be able to answer all of the letters but I'll try to stick to the ones which may be of benefit to the most inmates.

Here I want to lay down a few ground rules and make a couple of requests of letter-writers. First, if you want your letter answered, a little bribe wouldn't hurt. I'm not a jailhouse merchant; don't think I am. But a little testament of heartfelt

sincerity on your part would be accepted in the same spirit. My preference, by the way, is single-stitch petitpoint, unless of course you have some "smoke".

Secondly, whoever it is that's addressing my mail to the "protection" range, please desist ... or you'll soon be getting yours there. Also, whoever it is that's sending the anonymous perfumed letters should please send a soul-searing intimate snapshot with the next letter. I resent triflers.

Speaking of snapshots, for two bales I can send you one of me. They're only Polaroids but everyone knows Polaroids can sometimes be the most fun. No Vogue please. I also have a deal on Slow George T-shirts right now, to say nothing of autographed Dayglo posters. Prices available upon request. No dickering and no COD's. Even Slow George is not that slow.

I have some booklets which are free for the asking. These were inspired by the deluge of letters I got on the subjects. Obviously these were areas of general interest to cons. Two booklets have been printed so far, How To Make A Mandatory Parole and Your Classification Officer and You: Do-it-yourself Corrections. The second one is XX-rated, so send in proof of age please.

A lot of you guys are sending in condescending letters. I'm not going to say you should show more respect to your elders, but I will say this: this is our home and you're just passing through. When you tease the house dogs they bite us too, so don't ask me to tell you ways to tease them more. The next guy who addresses his letter to Pops will find out "Pops" can still bench press more than his own weight. The same goes for the scholar in

Sask. Pen'y. who addressed his to Geriatric George. I resent the con who suggested I should transfer to the bug joint at Matsqui. That he thinks I qualify is kind of a compliment because you have to be a bug to get along here. Seriously though, when they get you to Matsqui you become a "patient" instead of a "con" and that means you're "sick" and that lets them ring in the old Hippocratic Oath justifications for messing with your head. The way I figger it, if you get along in that society out there and if you like the way everybody out there does things, you're really sick! Much better to be right here with the normal people. It gets a bit grim when there's a full moon, but this doesn't happen so often I can't live with it.

Wisdom being what it is, I have the answers to everything. This doesn't mean you should identify me with The Man, so pack in the letters that begin "Dear Sir" and end with "Amen". You wanna say something to The Man, send him a kite or whisper to him when he's standing in the Dome.

My specialty with Advice to Inmate letters is how a guy can get a job change when The Man knows he only wants to get closer to his kid. Also I gotta lotta lore on how to get rid of the grinders outside and the grass-cutters inside. If enough guys write, I'll do a pamphlet or two on these subjects.

I don't mind if street people want to write for advice, cuz most of you sure as hell need it, but don't expect me to relate to you. Just look upon me as your very own paternalistic Social Worker. \$6.00 a letter, no COD's, no refunds, and your address goes on our exclusive Burglary of the

Month list for distribution to all of our members currently doing paroles in your city.

Now that I think of it, you young dope fiends who've been sending in "Eat This Page" letters should stop because I never get to read them and the Transition guys on the street are all getting constipated. From the look of some of the stuff they print, none of them are getting off on the pages anyway.

Don't write asking my advice on problems you can solve yourself. That's what the staff are there for; ask their advice. What I can do in this regard is give you a general tip: the best guide to the uselessness of staff advice is the length of their hair; the shorter the hair the more useless the advice, unless a guy is bald in which case you watch for whether he tries to make a few strands cover a lotta skin --- if he does you can be sure that he'll give useless advice because obviously he'll accept useless advice himself.

If you want to get some "sincere" stuff onto your joint file though, send me an "in confidence" letter with all the rosy details. The censor will pick it off, reason that if you write "in confidence" you must be being truthful for once, and Xerox the letter before he sends it out. The Xerox copy will go on your file.

These should be enough guidelines for letter-writers to put this column on a ~~paying~~ frank, benevolent basis. So 'til then, next month I mean, this is Slow George saying, keep those cards and letters coming --- but don't forget, no COD's!

ANOTHER FORM OF TRANSITION

Transition's CRIME AGAINST HUMANITY AWARD goes this month to Doctor G.D. Scott, psychiatrist extraordinaire of the Canadian Penitentiary Service for his intrepid pursuit of props for his notion that most inmates are lunatics, and for his dauntless effort to increase the value of common stock in Seagrams Distillers Ltd.

With his catch-all term "character disorder" Dr. Scott joins the vivacious company of Drs. Hoffer, Marcus, Coburn, and fourscore and seven more, all who would cure not only illnesses they diagnose but illnesses they invent, all who would have inmates forced to cope with a world and a life style with which the good doctors themselves are unable or unwilling to cope.

Because Dr. Scott can omnisciently place the best interests of his profession ahead of those of its victim-patients, yet do so in the name of the victim-patients' best interests, we give him our award. It is our sincerest hope that the award be as cherished by the good doctor as his belief in the medicinal products of Seagrams.

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